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9 Expert Tips for Choosing the Right Long-Term Care

Choosing the right long-term care community for an older loved one who needs regular care can be complicated. Many families ask: *What should I consider in choosing? How do I know if the long-term care community I choose will be best for my love one?*

The good news is that there are excellent independent resources available that can help to make choosing the best long term care community for your loved one easier.

For example, **The Mayo Clinic** article, [Long-Term Care: Early Planning Pays Off](#), and other online resources provide criteria and key questions to consider when choosing a long-term care community. These include:

1. **Does it provide the services needed?** Does your loved one need help with everyday activities, such as getting dressed or walking to the bathroom as offered in long-term care? How about skilled nursing care, physical, occupational or speech therapy? Do they require both? Determining specific care needs can help you decide on a provider community.
2. **Is it close to home?** Is it within easy driving distance to your home? Being close to friends and family can ease your loved one's transition to skilled nursing or long-term care.
3. **Licensure and reputation?** If a facility receives Medicare or Medicaid funding, it is inspected periodically by a state surveyor. How well did the community do in its state survey? If it had any deficiencies, have they been rectified? Also, what is its reputation in the area?
4. **Quality of care.** Does the community have a Medical Director and a board-certified physician specializing in physical and medical rehabilitation for skilled nursing? Do they provide 24/7 nursing care and supervision, which includes pain management, medication, and wound care services? Also, are nursing assistants available to help with dressing, grooming, personal hygiene and bathing for long-term care residents? These factors are extremely important when choosing a long-term care community.
5. **Are life enrichment activities emphasized?** Ask about the types of activities offered to both skilled nursing and long-term care residents. An effective activity department will interview residents about their personal interests and preferences and offer such recreational options such as music, painting, pet therapy, games, worship services and community outings.
6. **Meals and snacks.** Three meals as well as snacks should be provided daily to skilled nursing and long-term care residents. Is the food tasteful and nutritious? Are accommodations made for dietary restrictions and preferences? Does a dietitian meet individually with each resident to



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customize a nutritional plan, which focuses on their personal tastes and needs? It is a good idea to visit during mealtime to visit the dining areas and have a meal there.

7. **Is there a home-like environment?** In choosing a long-term care provider, you should consider whether private rooms are important and determine whether personal belongings and furnishings may be brought to the facility to make the resident's room feel homier. Also, are there inviting places such as recreation areas, lounges and outdoor patios where residents can gather to participate in activities, enjoy one another's company and be a part of the community?
8. **What about memory care?** These days, memory care is an increasingly important factor in choosing long-term care. Is there a safe, separate unit for residents with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia? Are staff members specially trained to care for someone with dementia? Is there ongoing staff training about Alzheimer's disease and dementia?
9. **Can you afford it?** Before choosing a provider review the details on prices, fees and services. Know what's included in the monthly fee and what costs extra.

By following these expert guidelines, you will increase your odds of choosing wisely and selecting a long-term care community that best fits your loved one's needs and offers you the greatest peace of mind.

Discover Our Healthy Tradition of Care and Wellness

Located adjacent to Lankenau Medical Center, Saunders House – [part of Main Line Senior Care Alliance](#) – has a celebrated tradition of providing [exceptional care and services](#) to seniors and their families. It's a tradition we're proud to continue.

Today, Saunders House offers a range of services – including [short-term rehabilitation](#), [traditional nursing care](#), [restorative care](#), [memory care](#), [respite care](#) and specialized care for individuals with visual impairments – all in a setting that is warm, welcoming and nurturing.

For more information on Saunders House, our Short-Term Rehabilitation program and other professional services, please call us today at (610) 658-5100 or [contact us online](#).

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